

REMARKS

In the last Office Action, claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Appln. No. 10-282260 to Hatanawa ("Hatanawa"), and claims 2, 8, 12 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hatanawa. Claims 13-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hatanawa in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,490,123 to Biver ("Biver"). Claim 18 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hatanawa in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,505,808 to Eschle ("Eschle"). Claims 6-7 were allowed, and claim 15 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim and were otherwise indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In accordance with this response, rejected claims 2, 4, 8, 12-14 and 19 have been canceled. Objected to claim 15 has been rewritten in independent form to incorporate the subject matter of base claim 12 and intervening claims 13-14, thereby placing claim 15 in allowable form. Claim 18 has been amended to depend on allowable claim 15 rather than now-canceled claim 12.

In view of the foregoing amendments, only allowed claims 6-7 and allowable claims 15 and 18 remain pending in the application. As recognized by the Examiner, the prior art of record does not disclose or suggest the subject matter of claims 6-7 and allowable claims 15 and 18. Accordingly, the application is now believed to be in allowable form.

In view of the foregoing, favorable reconsideration and passage of the application to issue are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

ADAMS & WILKS
Attorneys for Applicants

By: 

Bruce L. Adams
Reg. No. 25,385

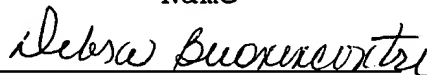
17 Battery Place
Suite 1231
New York, NY 10004
(212) 809-3700

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Debra Buonincontri

Name



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November 17, 2005

Date